

to fight for those important, responsible, and necessary changes in the coming months.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3668 contains temporary extensions of several important programs that affect low-income families with children. I urge its passage.

The subcommittee on which I am the ranking Republican, the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support, oversees the Nation's welfare, child care, and related programs designed to promote and support work by low-income families. It is important to extend the critical supports Congress enacted in recent years to advance those goals, such as the Transitional Medical Assistance program continued under this bill. I am all for that. Every Member should support that.

This legislation also extends the Abstinence Education program, which supports efforts to prevent teenage pregnancy and premarital sexual activity, with a goal of reducing the childbearing outside marriage. Childbearing outside marriage is directly associated with higher poverty rates and ultimately greater welfare receipt and dependence. All Members should support measures designed to reduce the chances children are raised in poverty.

The legislation has other important features, like an extension of the Qualified Individuals program that provides Medicare premium assistance to certain low-income beneficiaries. However, I would like to draw the House's attention to one provision that, as currently drafted, may not achieve the intended effect and thus may not result in the savings suggested by the CBO scoring of this legislation.

This provision appears in section 4 of the legislation, titled "Extension of SSI Web-Based Asset Demonstration Project to the Medicaid Program." The Social Security Administration, SSA, currently is operating a project testing ways to improve asset verification under the Supplemental Security Income, SSI, program. The current project seeks to make sure that SSI applicants are accurately reporting all the assets, like personal savings accounts, to which they can and should turn for support before expecting monthly SSI checks from taxpayers. Since SSI is a means-tested benefit program, it only makes sense to focus benefits on those who don't have a large amount of personal savings, for example, on which to depend.

In recent years, the SSA project has tested comparing individuals' self-reports of their savings account assets with actual bank records. This effort has already produced significant savings in the few States where it has been applied, including uncovering some individuals with tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of dollars in undisclosed assets. So it makes sense to expand this effort to include other means-tested programs, as the legislation proposes, including the expensive Medicaid program.

However, it is my understanding that the legislative language in H.R. 3668 includes a number of drafting flaws that will effectively prevent the proposed expansion of this asset verification project from being achieved. Problems include a lack of reference in the legislative language to the need to obtain written consent from individuals for the purpose of obtaining information for the Medicaid program. This may prevent banks from sharing such information with Medicaid officials as would be required to actually expand the current project

as proposed. Such "consent" language exists under the current SSI program as required by the Right to Financial Privacy Act, but not in H.R. 3668.

Even if this provision were to work as intended, it is noteworthy that nowhere does this legislation provide for reimbursement of Social Security Administration administrative costs that would inevitably result. SSA is already seeking additional administrative funds to address growing disability claims backlogs as well as handle its current duties, which include serving millions of America's seniors, including the rising numbers applying for retirement and disability benefits as the Baby Boom generation heads into retirement in the coming years.

It is my understanding that the authors of this legislation consulted with SSA on such technical issues during the drafting process, and opted against implementing any of the SSA suggestions.

Because of that, while the current CBO score suggests this legislation is paid for, I am afraid that the real world experience of these provisions will not reflect that optimistic forecast. If that turns out to be correct, the legislation before the House today will not satisfy the pay-as-you-go requirements of this body, which require that increases in spending by fully paid for by such as by offsetting spending cuts. And some individuals will obtain Medicaid benefits for which they should not have qualified.

While it may be too late to correct the drafting errors in this particular bill, I urge my colleagues especially on the House Energy and Commerce and the Senate Finance Committees, which have jurisdiction over Medicaid law, to revisit this legislative language and make the appropriate changes at the next available opportunity. I do not disagree with their intent, but suggest the legislative text reflected in this bill will not result in the outcome they intend. Related language appears in legislation preauthorizing the State Children's Health Insurance Program, which as it continues to be acted on in the coming days would serve as a worthy vehicle for making the appropriate changes to ensure the will of the House is carried out, and misspending under the Medicaid program is minimized as the House intends with this legislation.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. I yield back the balance of my time and urge the approval of the bill.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and encourage our fellow Members to pass H.R. 3668 and the extension.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3668.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BARBARA KAUFMAN EULOGY

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, we have lost a popular and well-educated school

administrator who was an outstanding student and gifted in music. Early on, her teachers would say of her, "She could walk amongst kings and not lose her common touch." She moved easily among people, singing her way into star status, and even appeared on an early TV version of "Star Search." Using her own talents of fashion, decorating and cooking, she was a role model for her students.

Barbara Kaufman was a special education administrative secretary for Los Angeles County Schools for over 25 years. She was a champion for the rights of children with special needs and deeply loved working in her chosen profession. In addition, Barbara volunteered in the political campaigns of myself, and she accepted any job that would add to the improvement of the people's social, political and economic conditions.

After many bouts with illness, Barbara's activities were limited. However, she participated as much as possible in her church, particularly enjoying Bible study and prayer support groups. Barbara Kaufman was a woman for all seasons and a witness for Christ.

A life so well lived has to be recognized by our Congress so the record will show her life as a role model for others. BJ's star will forever shine in the lives of those who knew and loved her.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WILSON of Ohio). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

OPPOSING EXTENSION OF HABEAS CORPUS RIGHTS TO ALIEN ENEMY COMBATANTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, today in the Judiciary Committee we were supposed to mark up H.R. 2826. I was informed that the Judiciary Committee has postponed this to a time uncertain. This was also to be the day that that bill or